NUMB. XVI.

THE PLAIN DEALER.

Neque Enim eſt hoc diſſimulandum, quod Obſcurari non poteſt, ſed præ nobis ferendum: Trahimur omnes Laudis Studio, & optimus quiſque, maximè, gloriâ ducitur.

CICER. Pro Archia Poeta.

Quam multos Scriptores rerum ſuarum magnus ille Alexander *Secum habuiſſe dicitur? Atque is tamen, cum in* Sigœo *ad* Achillis *tumulum aſtitiſſet, O fortunate, inquit, Adoleſcens, qui tue Virtutis* Homerum *Præconem inveneris! & veré. Nam niſi* Ilias *illa Extitiſſet, idem tumulus, qui corpus ejus contexerat, nomen etiam Obruiſſet.*

IBIDEM.

FRIDAY, MAY 15. 1724.

THERE Is a *Scantineſs*, in ſome Men's Souls, that gives a diſtaſteful Air to their very Favours, and their Praiſes; what the *Mein* is, to the Body, the *Temper* is to the Mind. And for Want of this Obſervation, on Occaſions where it had been moſt Uſeful, ſome have loſt their Friends good Will, by an arrogant Manner of *obliging* them; and others *prais'd* Men into a *Contempt*, both for their Perſons, and their Civilities.

THERE Muſt be viſible, in thoſe, who wou'd ſay, or do, Things engagingly, a certain Sweetneſs in the Eye, and a Senſe of Pleaſure in the Deportment. A Compliment is an *Affront*, when accompany'd with a ſullen Brow, or a negligent, an abſent, or ſupercilious, Behaviour. I appeal to my Readers, Whether they do not always find themſelves uneaſy in the Company of a Perſon, who ſeems more pleas'd with *Himſelf*, than with thoſe, he is converſing with.

I WAS drawn into this Reflection, by reading, the other Day, a little Copy of VERSES, which is printed, with ſome Poetical Peices of Mr. *Pope's*, and was Written by a Perſon of very great Quality, and whoſe *Wit, too*, was of the firſt Magnitude!

On Mr. POPE, and his POEMS.

WITH Age decay'd, with Courts, and Buſineſs, tir'd,
Caring for nothing, but what Eaſe requir'd;
Too dully Serious for the Muſe's *Sport,*
And, from the Critics, ſafe arriv'd in Port:
I little Thought of launching forth agen,
Amidſt advent'rous Rovers of the Pen:
And, after ſo much undeſerv'd Succeſs,
Thus hazarding at laſt, to make it leſs.
Encomiums *ſuit not this cenſorious Time,*
It ſelf a Subject for Satyric Rhyme;
Ignorance *Honour'd*, Wit, *and* Worth *defam'd*,
Folly *Triumphant, and ev'n* HOMER *blam'd!*
But to this Genius, join'd with ſo much Art,
Such various Learning, mix'd, in every Part,
Poets are bound a loud Applauſe to pay;
APOLLO *bids it, and they muſt obey.*
And, Yet, ſo wonderful, ſublime, a Thing,
As the great Iliad, *ſcarce ſhou'd make* Me *ſing!*
Except I juſtly cou'd, at once, commend,
A good Companion, and as firm a Friend.
One Moral, or a mere well natur'd Deed,
Does all Deſert in Sciences exceed.
Tis great Delight to laugh at ſome Men's Ways,
But a much greater, to give Merit Praiſe.

THE Good Nature of Mr. *Pope*, muſt be as Extenſive, as his Wit, if his Eſteem for this *Noble* Author was not leſſen'd, by ſo *Ignoble* a Start of his Poetry. It is a grudging, haughty, conſcious, reluctant, and penurious, Encomium! Under Pretence of Praiſe to a Friend, it indulges Spleen to his Enemies. It carries, throughout, a cloſer Eye upon *his own* Merit, than upon *His*, to whom he Addreſſes it. In four and twenty Verſes, the four odd ones, I *think*, have ſome faint Inclination to ſhow Reſpect to *another*; but the twenty, *I am ſure*, with a much ſtronger Bent, point directly upon *Himſelf*.

WOULD This great Man have applauded ſuch a POET, as he ought, he ſhow'd have forgotten, or ſeem'd to forget, both *Himſelf*, and his *Rank*, in that Reverence, ſo juſtly due to an Excellence, which will do Honour to our Nation. He ſhou'd not have imagin'd Himſelf Over Bountiful in his Condeſcention: The Praiſe of Mr. *Pope* will be a Theme for Wit, and Learning, when all the *Dukes*, his *Patrons*, ſhall be *loſt* in the Duſt that covers them! The accidental Advantages of Birth, Wealth, and Title, are ſo far from beſtowing Worth, where they find it not originally, that they ſerve but to make the Want of it more Obvious and Contemptible; whereas a *Genius* like this Gentleman's, ſurmounts all the ſhadowy Superiorities of Fortune, adorns Dignity it ſelf, and makes Obſcurity Illuſtrious!

THE Great *Cardinal Richelieu*, in a Circumſtance of like Nature, acted in ſo different a Manner, that I am always charm'd a freſh, when I read over a Letter, which he ſent to *Balzac* a *French* Writer, whoſe Merit was as Inferiot to Mr. *Pope's*, as the Grandeur of the *Prime Miniſter* was Superior to the *Nobleman's*: Let a Judgment be drawn, from an impartial Compariſon.

A

[Price Two Pence.]

A Letter from *Cardinal Richelieu*, to *Monſieur de Balzac*.

Paris February *the 4th*, 1621.

Sir,

'THO' I have often, and openly, declar'd what 'I think of your Writings, yet cannot I ſa-'tisfy my ſelf without ſending you, by this Letter, a 'more *Authentic* Approbation: I never had any par-'ticular Affection for your Perſon, and ſince, therefore, 'it is the great Prerogative of *Truth*, that compells me 'to my Opinion, I will take care, That the Eſteem, 'I profeſs for your Works, ſhall be no *barren Compli-'ment*; for my Praiſe ſhall be ſeconded by the *Ap-'plauſe* of a whole *People*.

'Or, if, notwithſtanding my Endeavours, ſome low 'Spirits ſhall be found, who may affect to think other-'wiſe, time will make them, but too ſenſible, that the 'Faults, they Impute to *You*, are Defects in their own 'Judgment. They are like People in the *Jaundice*, 'who ſee every Thing of that diſtemper'd Colour, 'which themſelves are afflicted by.

'IN The Days of our Anceſtors, Perſons of narrow 'Underſtanding, were implicite Admirers of what 'was above their Comprehenſion; but now, by a 'kind of *Elaſticity* in modern Reaſon, Judgment *ex-'tends* or *Contracts* it ſelf, to ſit cloſe upon our *Capa-'city*; and we approve, but juſt as far, as we are able 'to underſtand; blaſting every Thing by our Cen-'ſure, that we cannot reach by our Practice. Yet 'I hope, I do not preſume too much, when I ſay con-'cerning your Works, That *I ſee Things as they are*, 'and *declare 'em* what I *ſee* them. Your Conceptions 'are ſtrong, and the Flight of your Imagination out-'ſoars every Thing but your Reaſon; your Language 'is Pure; and your Expreſſion ſtrongly Elegant.

'I will conclude with this Caution; That you will 'be guilty in the Eye of God, if you ſuffer ſuch a Pen 'to *reſt*; or if you *Employ* it too *idly*. You ought to 'apply your ſelf henceforward, to grave and impor-'tant Subjects; and I am content that you ſhall im-'pute to *Me* all the *Blame*, if, when you do ſo, you re-'ceive not the Returns, which will be due to you. 'Already I am meditating an Opportunity to be 'known for

Your Affectionate Humble Servant,

The Cardinal of Richelieu.

I AM tranſported, while I read this Letter, at the flaming Intermixture of this Stateſman's lovely Qualities! What a Glow of Humanity! What a Conſciouſneſs of that Care, which is the Duty of the *Great*, to draw up Merit, out of Obſcurity! What a Knowledge of a State's true Intereſt, from the Force of ſuch Examples! What a genteel *Magnanimity*! What a ſpirited Race of Sweetneſs, does there Shine, in this ſhort Letter!

IT Is Pleaſant enough to remark, That both the *French* Encomium and the *Engliſh*, had Effects, the very Reverſe of what was intended by their Authors, yet, at the ſame Time, ſtrictly conſonant with *Juſtice*, and their different Merits; while the *Engliſh* Applauder Addreſſes to Mr. *Pope* the Praiſe he *means* to *Himſelf*; his Verſes are never Read, without leſſening his own Character; whereas, the generous *French Cardinal*, meaning nothing in his Letter, but the Encouragement of *Monſieur Balzac*, draws that Honour on his own Name, which he wou'd beſtow upon another's; and becomes *Himſelf*, the *Reader's Idol*, while he is pointing him where to Worſhip!

IT Was Impoſſible for *Monſieur Balzac*, after being thus nobly diſtinguiſh'd, not to ſtrain his Genius to the utmoſt, to keep Poſſeſſion of a Glory, he muſt ſo juſtly have been Proud of; whereas *Neglect*, on the other Hand, has diſcourag'd a thouſand Spirits, which might have been capable, had they been *Fortunate*, or ſupported by thoſe, who were ſo, to ſhine out as *living Lights*, and Illuſtrate the Age, they were Born in, thro' a long Courſe of Futurity. *Camoens*, whom the *Portugueſe* call the *Virgil* of *their* Country, has touch'd this Subject very happily, in the 5th Book of his *Luſiad*.

HOW ſweet is Praiſe, and juſtly purchas'd Glory,
By our own Actions, when to Heaven they ſoar!
Each noble Soul will Strain, *to leave his Story,*
An overmatch for all, who climb'd before.

Thoſe wond'rous heights, Achilles *reach'd in Arms,*
Had ne'er ſo ſtrongly mov'd the World's great Lord,
Had not the Muſe of Homer *giv'en 'em Charms,*
And row'd him from a Reſt, *he, thence, abhorr'd.*

Scipio's, *and* Cæſars, PORTUGAL *can boaſt,*
But has not bleſs'd them with exalted Hearts,
Once Dead, they Die for ever, *and are* loſt,
Becauſe, unfriended by the deathleſs Arts.

All thoſe immortal Names, that tread on Time,
Were learn'd themſelves, *or* lov'd *the Learned* All;
In Greece, *in* Rome, *in the moſt* barb'rous *Climes,*
In every Land, but taſteleſs PORTUGAL.

Mournfull I ſpeak it, to my Country's Shame,
Want of Excitement *keeps its Genius* Low;
Our rude and boiſt'rous Lords *are deaf to Fame,*
And ſeem, as careleſs to be known, *as* know.

Dull and of groſs Deſires, their empty Pride,
Dark and contracted, Taſtes *not what is Writ;*
For how, alas! ſhou'd Lameneſs *learn to* ſtride?
Or he, who underſtands not, *cheriſh* Wit!

Bleſt let the Muſes be, by thoſe I Sing,
That I, for no Reward, but Honour, *Born,*
Have for my Country's Glory, touch'd the String,
And laugh her titled Arrogance *to ſcorn.*

While on the Fame of Luſitania *bent,*
Your Charms, ye Nymphs of Tagus, *I reveal,*
Fortune *the Frame of my proud Hope has rent,*
And drags me friendleſs at her Chariot Wheel.

Degraded, at another's Board to eat,
A Rock *of* Want! *ſurrounded by my* Woes;
Ingratitude *it ſelf, unmov'd I meet,*
And riſe, the ſtronger, againſt Envy's *Blows.*

See Nymphs! what learned LORDS *your* Tagus *boaſts!*
What PATRONS *of the noble Arts we find!*
Such *is their Worth, who fill the* Publick Poſts!
And ſuch the Prize, *that Crowns a generous* Mind!

Printed for *J. Roberts*, in *Warwick-Lane*. Where *Letters* and *Advertiſements* are taken in.